



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Joseph Jado

**Chicago Area Man Pleads Guilty to Arson Relating to Involuntary Servitude
of Eastern European Women at Detroit Area Strip Clubs**

Duay Joseph Jado, age 28, an Iraqi citizen residing in Skokie, Illinois area, pled guilty today to setting fire to the car of one of the victims of a conspiracy to force Eastern European women to work as exotic dancers in Detroit area strip clubs, Stephen J. Murphy, United States Attorney, Eastern District of Michigan, and Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, announced today. United States District Judge Victoria A. Roberts accepted Jado's guilty plea to a violation of the "Interstate Travel in Aid of Racketeering Enterprises" Act by crossing state lines in the Spring of 2004 in order to commit the arson.

According to the plea agreement and other public court records, following the escape of one of the dancers of "Beauty Search, Inc." – the corporate cover for the trafficking organization – a ring-leader of the organization paid Jado to set fire to the dancer's car in retaliation for her escape, for failing to repay an outstanding debt allegedly owed to Beauty Search, Inc., and to send a message to other dancers not to follow in her footsteps.

"We will pursue the investigation and prosecution of this human trafficking organization,

wherever the evidence leads,” said U.S. Attorney Murphy. “Human trafficking crimes evidence some of the most brutal and detestable behaviors that one human being can visit upon another. Today’s plea indicates our resolve to bring to justice all participants in this odious sort of criminal activity.”

“Human trafficking is nothing less than modern day slavery that targets some of the most vulnerable in our society,” said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “The Department of Justice will continue to pursue and prosecute anyone who attempts to profit from human suffering.”

“Sadly, this case is an example of the continued victimization of a woman ensnared by an international human trafficking organization,” said Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Investigations (ICE) in Detroit. “Those who use threats of violence and intimidation against human trafficking victims can be certain that ICE and its partners will work to bring them to justice.”

United States Attorney Murphy further stated that with today’s plea, eight people have now been convicted of crimes associated with this trafficking conspiracy. On March 8, 2006, Aleksandr Maksimenko, of Livonia, Michigan, one of the ring-leaders of the scheme, pled guilty to conspiring to violate the civil rights of the dancers through involuntary servitude, as well as immigration and money laundering conspiracies. Another partner of Beauty Search, Inc., Michail Aronov, a Lithuanian citizen from the Chicago area, pled guilty to similar charges on September 8, 2005. Evgeniy Prokopenko and Alexander Bondarenko, two Ukrainian citizens residing in Brooklyn, NY, pled guilty to visa fraud on September 9, 2005, admitting that they entered into sham marriages in 2004 with two of the dancers in order to permit the dancers to gain entry into the United States. On November 1, 2005, Anna Gonikman-Starchenko, a Ukrainian citizen living in the Detroit metro area, pled guilty to obstruction-related charges stemming from actions taken following the arrests of Maksimenko and Aronov. On November 3, 2005, Niki Papoutsaki, a Greek citizen living in the Detroit metro area, pled guilty to misprision of a felony in connection with obstruction-related activity. Finally, on February 14, 2006, Valentina Maksimenko, a naturalized U.S. citizen residing in the Chicago area, pled guilty to a conspiracy to obstruct justice during the course of the federal investigation.

Jado remains in custody pending his sentencing. He faces a statutory maximum sentence of up to five years in prison. The parties agreed that under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines an appropriate sentence for Jado is 37 to 46 months in prison.

The government's investigation and prosecution of others involved in the trafficking scheme is continuing. The case is being investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, and the State Department Diplomatic Security Service. Assistant United States Attorney Mark Chutkow and Luis de Baca, Senior Litigation Counsel at the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section, are prosecuting the case. Peter Ziedas, Assistant United States Attorney is handling the asset forfeiture part of the case.